

Public Papers of the Presidents

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HEADLINE : Proclamation 6847 --National American Indian Heritage Month, 1995

BODY:

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

November is traditionally the season for thanksgiving in America, the time when we reflect on the abundance with which we have been blessed. It is especially fitting, then, that we set aside this month to pause and reflect on the many gifts bestowed on our land and our heritage by American Indians and Alaska Natives.

American Indians have a great reverence for the earth and its bounty, and they generously shared their knowledge and their food with the early European settlers in our country. We still enjoy that harvest today, with an agricultural industry that supports America and the world with the corn, P9tatoes, beans, cotton, and countless other crops first cultivated on this continent by American Indians.

A second and equally precious gift is that of courage. American Indians and Alaska Natives have fought and died for the United States of America in time of war, answering the call to service to defend our freedoms. The Navajo, Lakota, and Dakota Code talkers were crucial to our victory in the Pacific during World War II, and it was a Pima Indian, Ira Hayes, who helped to raise the American flag on Iwo Jima. They and so many others have endured separation, hardship, and sacrifice so that the world might know peace.

The gift of wisdom is one that our society has struggled to learn. Living in harmony with nature instead of seeking domination, American Indians have shown us how to be responsible for our environment, to treasure the beauty and resources of the land and water for which we are stewards, and to preserve them for the generations who will come after us. They have taught us as well the value of sharing, of recognizing that there must be room at America's table for all her peoples.

American Indians and Alaska Natives have made invaluable contributions to our common heritage; in every field of human endeavor, from the arts, sciences, and humanities to politics, religion, and public service, they have added immeasurably to the strength of our civilization.

As we celebrate National American Indian Heritage Month, we give thanks for these contributions and acknowledge the special legal relationship that exists between the tribes and the Government of the United States of America.

Public Papers of the Presidents

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 1995 as National American Indian Heritage Month. I urge all Americans, as well as their elected representatives at the Federal, State, local, and tribal levels, to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

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